

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Maria Jose Vides

**Date Submitted:** 02/25/2022 04:15 PM

**Council File No:** 17-0046-S2

**Comments for Public Posting:** RE: Urge for Passage of Program Framework Recommendations for Next Phase of LA Justice Fund Founded in 1986 the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) is a California leader, with national impact, made up of diverse immigrant families and individuals who act as agents of social change to achieve a world with freedom of mobility, full human rights, and true participatory democracy, fully inclusive of refugees and immigrants. CHIRLA prides itself in its work to serve the immigrant community through civic engagement, community education, organizing, advocacy at the forefronts of local, state, and federal government, and the provision of legal immigration services. On behalf of CHIRLA, I am writing to urge Budget & Finance Committee Chair Krekorian to pass the program recommendations outlined below for the next phase of the LA Justice Fund immediately and send to the full city council for final approval. We urge the City to immediately approve the program framework outlined in the CLA report below and release the allocated budget funding that provide universal representation for individuals and families dealing with deportation and removal proceedings in Los Angeles County, as well as wrap-around services: - Option 1A: Adopt the proposed Immigrant Legal Services framework, in partnership with LA County, CCF, and Weingart, and instruct the CAO and CLA to report on the transfer of existing LAJF cases to the new program. - Option 2B: Authorize city funds allocated in the FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget to be used for financing existing LAJF cases and new cases under the new Immigrant Legal Services framework - Option 3B: Adopt a merit-blind approach where criminal history is not considered as eligibility criteria for participating in the new program Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, contact Esperanza Guevara at [eguevara@chirla.org](mailto:eguevara@chirla.org) or Maria Jose Vides at [mvides@chirla.org](mailto:mvides@chirla.org).



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February 24th, 2022

The Honorable Paul Krekorian  
Los Angeles City Council  
Budget and Finance Committee  
200 N Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA, 90012

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

**RE: Urge for Passage of Program Framework Recommendations for Next Phase of LA Justice Fund**

Founded in 1986 the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) is a California leader, with national impact, made up of diverse immigrant families and individuals who act as agents of social change to achieve a world with freedom of mobility, full human rights, and true participatory democracy, fully inclusive of refugees and immigrants. CHIRLA prides itself in its work to serve the immigrant community through civic engagement, community education, organizing, advocacy at the forefronts of local, state, and federal government, and the provision of legal immigration services. **On behalf of CHIRLA, I am writing to urge Budget & Finance Committee Chair Krekorian to pass the program recommendations outlined below for the next phase of the LA Justice Fund immediately and send to the full city council for final approval.**

As a LAJF grantee, CHIRLA provided direct representation to clients in removal proceedings. The LAJF pilot program demonstrated the power of a public-private partnership to expand the safety net available to the [one-third of Angelenos](#) who identify as immigrants. Several evaluation reports and analyses have been completed to determine the impact and effectiveness

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of the program since its launch in 2017.<sup>1 2</sup> The findings overwhelmingly confirmed the positive impact the program had, in both direct and indirect ways, including:

- Ensuring access to due process for the most vulnerable community members; with a qualified attorney by their side, immigrants are five times more likely to win relief from deportation;
- Building and strengthening the removal defense capacity of the legal services infrastructure in Los Angeles;
- Conducting 2,047 legal screenings and legal representation in 568 cases; and,
- Learning best practices for sustainable investments in deportation defense and enhancing the impact of initial investments.<sup>3</sup>

**The County of Los Angeles has approved its model and legal service providers are ready to implement the next phase of LAJF, however, the City has yet to fulfill its commitment to immigrant families.** . As the devastating impacts of a public health crisis linger and meet the harms inflicted by systemic racism and decades of anti-immigrant attacks, immigrants in Los Angeles are still facing deportation without legal counsel. While we applauded the allocation by the City of \$6 million over the next three years for the Phase II of the Justice Fund, the need to move this program forward has grown increasingly urgent. CHIRLA continues to strongly support program recommendations originally outlined in the Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) with input from advocates and legal service providers:

- Ensure due process for all through a universal representation model, which integrates a merits-blind intake system and makes the primary eligibility criteria income and lack of private counsel;
- Relaxed proof of residency requirements;
- Strengthen capacity and increase scale for an expanded deportation defense program.

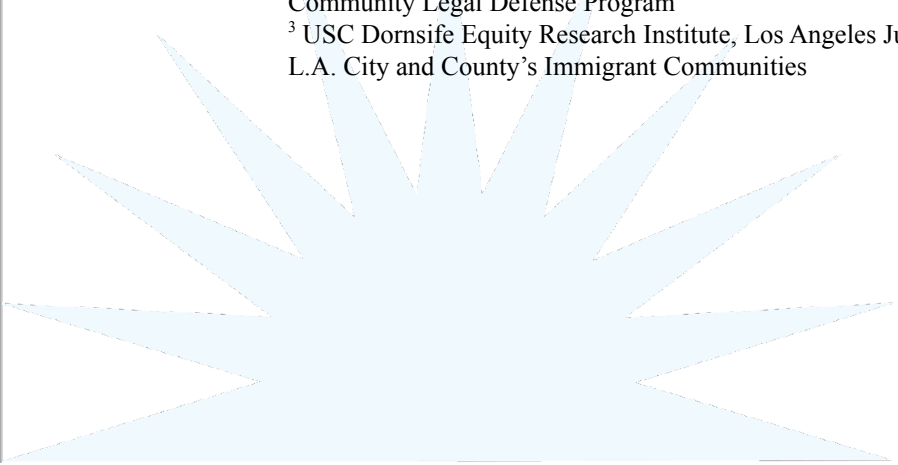
**We urge the City to immediately approve the program framework outlined in the CLA report below and release the allocated budget funding that provide universal**

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<sup>1</sup> Vera Institute of Justice for the California Community Foundation, Los Angeles Justice Fund: Year 2 Evaluation

<sup>2</sup> Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, Proposal for a Los Angeles Immigrant Community Legal Defense Program

<sup>3</sup> USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute, Los Angeles Justice Fund: Safeguarding the Safety Net for L.A. City and County's Immigrant Communities





**representation for individuals and families dealing with deportation and removal proceedings in Los Angeles County, as well as wrap-around services:**

Option 1A: Adopt the proposed Immigrant Legal Services framework, in partnership with LA County, CCF, and Weingart, and instruct the CAO and CLA to report on the transfer of existing LAJF cases to the new program.

Option 2B: Authorize city funds allocated in the FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget to be used for financing existing LAJF cases and new cases under the new Immigrant Legal Services framework

Option 3B: Adopt a merit-blind approach where criminal history is not considered as eligibility criteria for participating in the new program

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, contact Esperanza Guevara at [eguevara@chirla.org](mailto:eguevara@chirla.org).

Esperanza Guevara  
Deputy Director, Policy and Advocacy  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

CC:  
Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, Los Angeles City Council  
Los Angeles City Budget and Finance Committee

